5 Dozen Mouse Eggs

1757

2021

William Blake Birthday Issue

10/10

5 DOZEN MOUSE EGGS
2021
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Peter Van Toorn.....MOUNTAIN BOOGIE
.....MOUNTAIN STICK

Maxianne Berger 3 Photo Haiga.....SHAPESHIFTER
.....EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK
.....PENETRATING DANK

Ken Norris.....ORIGINS
.....7 DEADLY SINS
.....STEPS

Rachel McCrum.....BAREFOOT
.....HIGH FUNCTIONING
.....STURGEON MOON
.....REFLECTING BACK

Joe Fiorito.....AN OLD QUEEN, RECALLS
.....I AND MY BROTHERS
.....LAKE SUPERIOR LAMENT
.....ROSE

Kate Siklosi.....CONJURE 1
.....CONJURE 2
.....CONJURE 3
.....CONJURE 4

Artie Gold & George Bowering.....RELATIVITY OF SPRING & SPRING'S RELATIVITY

Jennifer Moxley.....CREATIVE NON-FICTION
.....THANKSGIVING
.....THE MEDITATION LESSON
.....WHILE WRITING IN MY JOURNAL

Endre Farkas.....RIP PVT
..... GARDEN OF LOVE

Tom Konyves & Ken Norris..... PROVERBSI OF HELLO

BIOGRAPHIES
CONTRIBUTORS BOOK COVERS

Peter Van Toorn

1944-2021

MOUNTAIN BOOGIE

In art, content is very tiny, content. De Kooning

O peppermint moon behind the loud running clouds!
O aspirin violets!
O the cue to look up splickering out there in the u-sphere!
O aspirin ivories!
O nick nock of madder smoosh!
O the sparks when she peels her sweater in the dark!
O sepia blush!
O pink pink: the fingers' rinks winking with quick!
O no go zipper zinc!
O comet locked up in the shed by mistake!
O the worm in the wick of the fire!
O that sienna stays!
O baby's milkteeth loose in a hailstorm!
O bright-assed baboon who sat on the peacock's glory!
O the blue pencils of rain on the roof tiles!
O leapfrog green!
O mouse on the telephone: dunk your biscuit static!
O tapioca from Oka tango!
O chrome shimmy of blackfly blood!
O dill to pistachio!
O trout with rainbow up, lungs two feet deep in sharp air!
O tobacco nutmegs!
O angel hairs tuned in a cigarbox: *viola le clavecin!*
O tiny chrome haypile of the stars!
O calico cat with spaghetti whiskers!
O blizzard whites!
O piano crates unloading: thunder over Chinatown!
O old plum tree with joker of jade up your sleeves!

O peonies! the flutes of spice!
O spinach wrinkles!
O fire chopping a log to stips of ash!
O yoghurt thwop!
O clam-shell tulip cheeks!
O pink-spoggled eggs on umber craterboard!
O saffron velleity!
O opal winter lightning through the onyx glass!
O bamboo arpeggio!
O magnolia stalled like creamy brookwater!
O icicle pearls!
O for some steamy slivers to kick the goop out of flamingo balls!
O mustard gush!
O coffee, khaki, cookie, banana!
O peachy rhum goo!
O sunladder yellow!
O amber hoofclick!
O cowlick of cobalt left in for the last failing argument!
O ozone manure!
O lake red with gold-ishings in it!
O bronze leaf hopping a highway of mint & toffee headlights!
O cigarette paper rolled by fog tongue!
O crumpled copper onionwrap!
O perfume of the stars around the moon!
O barnstraw blond!
O lollipop lick of steaming tangerine air!

From *Mountain Tea*
Published by Signal Editions, 2003

Peter Van Toorn

MOUNTAIN STICK

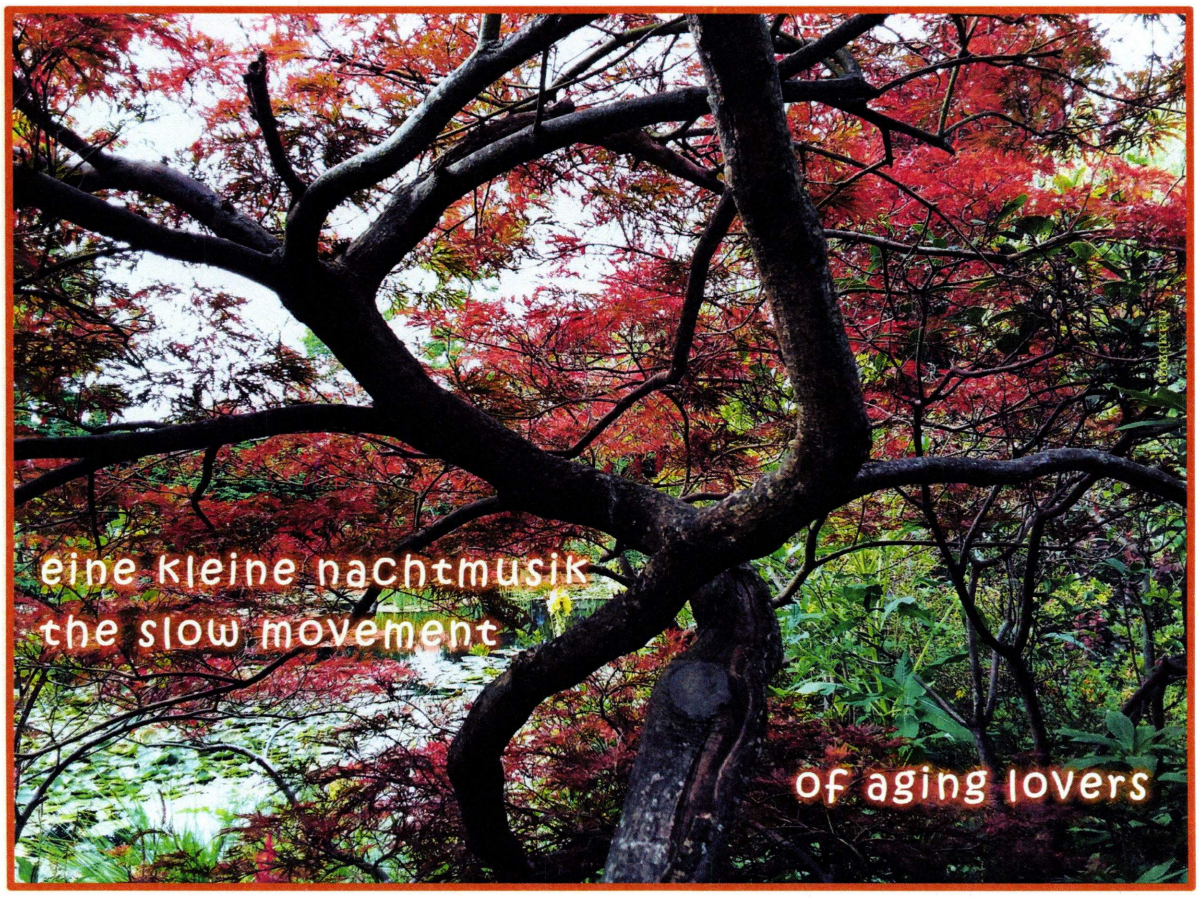
For pitee runneth soone gentil herte
Chaucer

As fit for swinging and full of good oak
as the day it was cut down for a walk;
and taken for granted on any hike
Till out climbing up a bouldershot brook
one fall, up mountain; and stopping to shake
the stiffness out of my walk, and just make
some tea in the shade by the brook, I woke
to a moon; and like the world's oldest book
I read my father's spiral in the stick's
bronze skin, with flowers here and there cut out,
a line no shoulderload, sweaty hands, nicks
or scratches from years of walking would flout:
a lifeline – one world, one heart, one motion –
swinging through darkness with sun and moon.

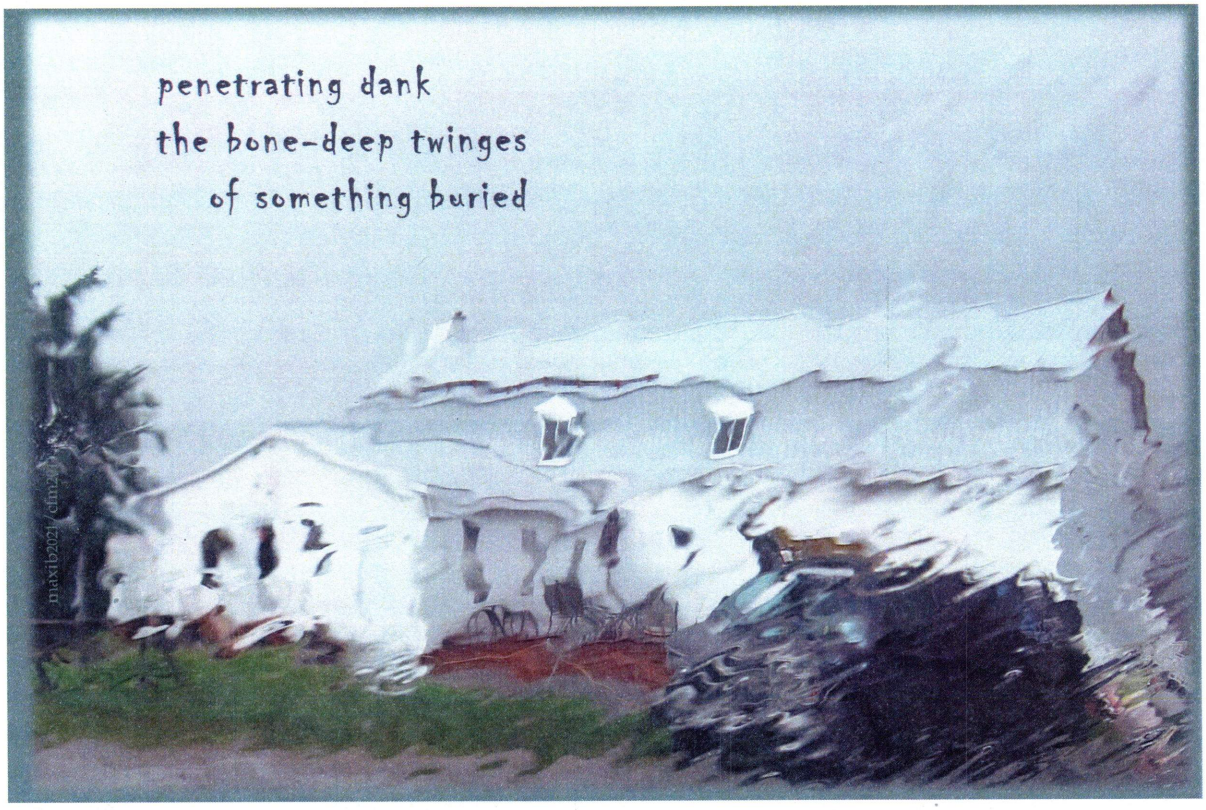
From *Mountain Tea*
Published by Signal Editions, 2003

Maxianne Berger

Maxianne Berger



Maxianne Berger



Ken Norris

ORIGINS

Derived from kale,
from spinach, from carrots,
from wooden crates
filled with burgeoning oranges.
Derived from bitter lemons and sweet bananas,
bright limes, a moon-shaped cantaloupe,
a blue basket of ripe red strawberries.

Derived from the muscular dimensions
of squash, of rhubarb,
sweet potatoes in their rough skin,
of sweet peas in their pods,
eggplants in their purple casings,
limbed celery,
the black-seeded clarity of watermelon.

Potatoes were my tutors,
and it was a hand of broccoli
that rocked the cradle,
while cauliflower performed
all kinds of amusement
to entertain the mind of a child.

Derived from tangy tangerines and grapefruit,
from spiky pineapple and milky coconut,
from blueberries, raspberries, blackberries,
from garlic, ginger, basil, oregano, rosemary,
from moist mushrooms and stalky asparagus,
dumpy turnips and twisting kohlrabi,
from moustaches of green beans
and ears of husky corn,
from all the edible gifts of the earth.

Ken Norris

7 DEADLY SINS

Seven,
seven,
seven

deadly sins.

So many rules to bend.

Watch out where you step in.

pride humility

envy kindness

gluttony temperance

greed
charity

chastity lust

diligence sloth

patience wrath

Ken Norris

A FRANK O'HARA TRANSLATION

STEPS

How funny you used to be New York
like Gene Wilder in *The Producers*
and the St. Mark's Church was always rocking with poetry

Here today in Maine I have just slow-crawled out of bed
early on Veteran's Day, a rolled towel
wrapped around my neck to cradle it from stiffness,
it's still early morning November dark, but I think
the blue sky will put in an appearance
When I was young and living in Manhattan
all I wanted was my bed in my fourteenth floor apartment
and you in it,
the late night traffic roaring by
on Amsterdam Avenue below, heading noisily uptown.
On Spring days I'd wander the cluttered streets in a crowd
and not be concerned about anything other
than what the day might provide—
now Autumn crowds me
with its fallen leaves and blue despair.

I was just there a few weeks ago
taking in the music, taking in the air.
New York, tell me,
where is Taylor Swift—
she's just getting home to her condo
after a night of drinking and dancing with friends,
and Woody Allen's on a shoot,
some people are out early, walking their dogs
in their fall coats, and Central Park's
slowly filling up with runners getting ready for a morning jog
before they head off to work—

Rachel McCrum

BAREFOOT

On the gulf strand beyond Moisie at *l'heure dorée*
sun hazed behind long travelled smoke and evening
white crash of waves and desolate wind
and coarse-grained sand stretching on and on
straining vision after so many months close-quartered
facing out towards a vertigo of restless horizon
the plovers dart and flicker over driftwood lines
strong-necked gulls fly low over the water
one raptor beak bringing a writhing crab
for a tawny downed youngster breaking open
the carapace in some act of savage familial love
long-abandoned tendons flicker, a calf muscle
twitches, soles scoured with rough spheres and salt
wake as after a long sleep, screaming out, alive.

Rachel McCrum

STURGEON MOON

Lie still at the low ebb waterline.
For once, let the waves do their caressing work.
The salt to preserve that worth saving,
The tide to carry away what is not.

1. HIGH-FUNCTIONING

Today
I perform my function
I serve my function
I carry out my function
I understand my function

I operate efficiently
I work effectively
I am in line with the standard
I function from the baseline
I achieve my goal
I do my job
I know my occupation
I fulfil my purpose
I achieve my tasks
I do things

in the
right
proper
correct
way

I am the norm
I am the median
I am the average
I am the standard
I meet the target
I hit the KPI
I complete the metrics
I perform
adequately

*

Complete:

_____

is a function of

_____

i.e.
Height
is a function of
age

*

2. MID-FUNCTIONING

I go to the function
I function at the function

I carry out the action
for which
I exist
today
I function
barely

I am functional
no more
no less
I function
at the bare-minimum

*

Complete:

_____

are a function of

_____

i.e.

My personal problems
are a function of
my drinking

*

3. LOW-FUNCTIONING

Why is my function not a function
Why is my function not outputting anything
Why is my function not working please
Why is my function showing an error
Why is my function not completing
Why is my function not functioning

Today
I function
poorly

I am without function
My behaviour is
outside the prescribed limits
below par
less than acceptable
I am without purpose
I am destitute of function
I am a functionless component

Tomorrow
I will be
more

functional.

*

Complete:

_____

is a function of

_____

i.e.
Beauty
is a function of
variation

*

Rachel McCrum

Greetings card found in gift shop Percé, Gaspésie, Québec, in June 2021//how many ways to twist a history.

*

[texte originale.Auteur unknown]

Barques reflétantes
Alberto Tommi

Né en 1917 à Empoli, en Toscane Italie, est une de ces figures qui, ayant dans un premier temps granement contribué au paysage culturel québécois, a été dans un second temps oublié par l'institution. Pourtant, son oeuvre est fraiche et puissante, son héritage classique floretin trouvant à se réinventer dans les paysages bruts de la cote de Percé ou dans la fragilté de ses embarcations de peche. Il est décédé en 1959, à Percé.

*

[Original translation. Translator unknown]

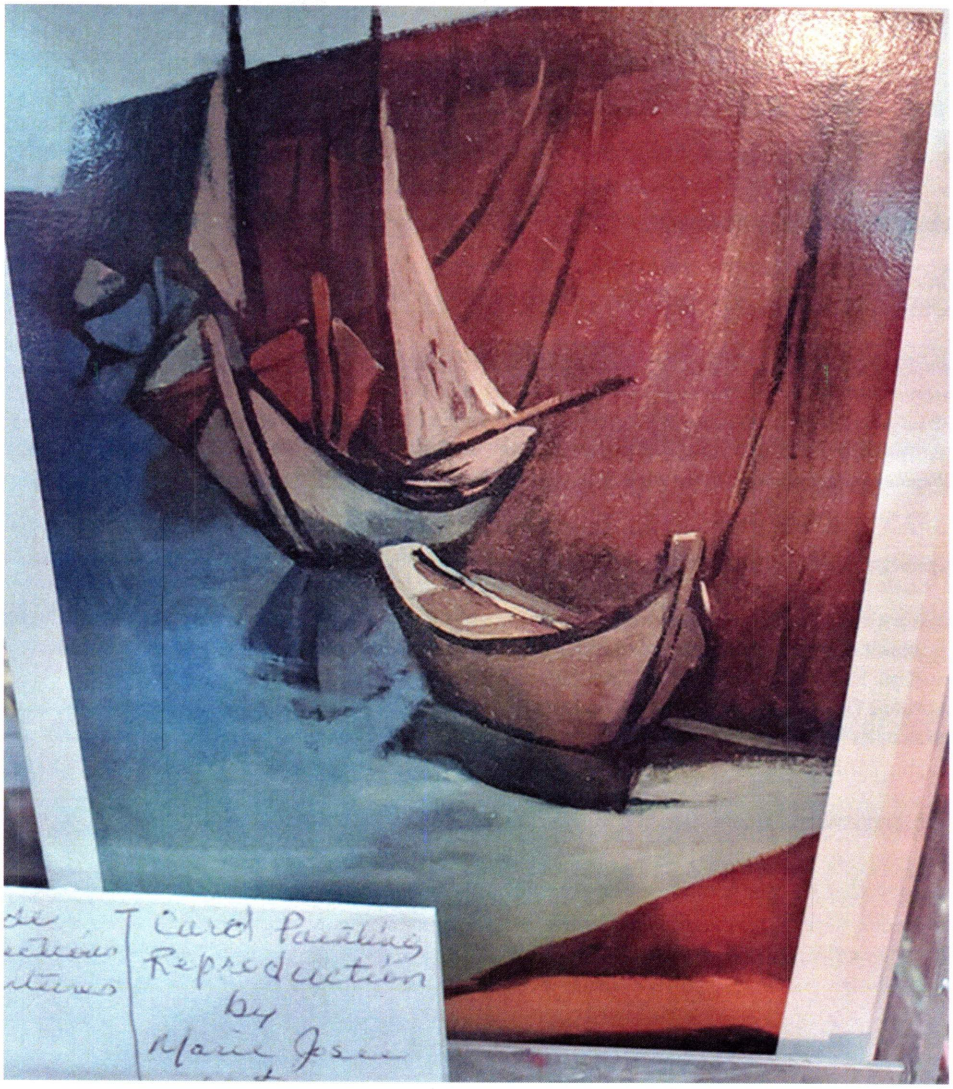
Been born in 1917 to Empoli, in Tuscany Italy, is one of the these faces(figures) which having contributed at first largely to the cultural landscape from Quebec, was secondly forgotten by the institution. Nevertheless his (her, its) work is fresh (cool) and powerful, its Florentine classic inheritance finding to reinvent in the raw (gross) landscapes of the coast (rib) of Drilled or in the fragility of its boats of peach (fishing). He (it) died in 1959, in Drilled.

*

[poem, September 2021. Author, Rachel McCrum]

REFLECTING BACK

Been borne minorly
on a classic Tuesday
employed and instituted
inherited then reinvented
once cult now rural
raw and gross
from fresh to the fragility
of these embarcations
pierced through
and through,
fished, traversed, translated,
and so excavated, died.


Carol Painting
Reproduction
by
Marie Josee

Joe Fiorito

AN OLD QUEEN RECALLS

My father was a blacksmith.
My mother was a nurse.
I wore her dresses out of doors.
We heard him curse.

My adult life was underground –
a business suit, a vest.
Hallowe'en was a holy day –
lipstick, heels, the rest.

I knew how to make a man
feel good when I took his hand.
"You could, so you did?"
Darling, I still can.

- from "City Poems", Exile Editions

Joe Fiorito

I AND MY BROTHERS

We were four;
three of us are no more –
they, doomed

to die in rented rooms
from drugs & drink
or push & shove,

were done in
by the want – not mine –
of love.

Joe Fiorito

LAKE SUPERIOR LAMENT (2)

I knelt and held her narrow hips;
night shift: durum wheat, newsprint,
red ore spilled into ships.

I kissed her narrow foot, her swollen
lips; pulp logs tumbled in barking drums
in the mill beside the lake.

She shivered in the motel light,
as if she knew a heart – not hers but mine –
would break.

from "All I Have Learned Is Where I Have Been"
Signal Editions

Joe Fiorito

ROSE

half of her was
here, hiding in plain
sight

half of her was
there, draped
in a sheet

dark blood where
her legs used
to meet.

Kate Siklosi

CONJURE 1-4

st
ench
ts and pri
istinct cultural in
nose communities.
preserve and promo
med. Everyone has
arliamen
edings
qua

Artie Gold & George Bowering

from *Ruby Wounds*

AG: RELATIVITY OF SPRING

I

The nouns are hungry for sense.
The facts are not known.
They are tasteless, by which is meant
they are hard to transcribe.
They taste the colour of the sky against cement.
They appeal silently as apples might,
and their bodies crawl like turtles with shells,
and they fall, taking sun to the ground on them.

Yipping like dogs, they crawl, being blistered in the sun.
On the back of the dolphin a caress touches like an alarm,
cancer of the colon, the skin
tendril of the bone's sensuality.

The dark dirty dishwater of an x-ray plate.
The queen's love throws the first pitch.
It reveals the hidden.
It sings into activity/
telling garbage from submerged fish
and dreams.

Water's sudden edge,
bell's flower.
For the sun to be useful to its breathing.
for the sight who loses sequence in art,
he comes up with what chemicals it will provide.
She watches her replacement.

We the complex lobster wearing animal pelt.
we the gods describe this earth totally.
Where the sharks can never really come is totally our own.
Where this takes place is our authority.

The air's barely acceptable sending of sound.
The queen's idea throbs like starmatter.
No one wasting words outside of speech,
no one worries hard stone.
The surprise in one's voice not heard from passing back to oneself.
The boards of the palace are grained.

II

I dance like air in autumn.
I house like a shadow,
mercenary of breath,
shortcircuiter of meadow.
Each season I arrange orthogonally.
Every semicircular jar I denote pleasurable,
In the marketplace of chrome dwarfs,
in the ring of deserts,
in the feelings of scorned women reaching out to trap this society,
the whips of each jealousy reaching chords deeper than music.
These days are hard to endure going through submarine time
These policemen strike into fear itself.

I am the cauldron of bowling prowess.
I am the crying one who is struck.
I am like a greatness whose ass even pirates must kiss,
and I am exactly worrying, hesitation,
The double versatility of early intent.
The pompous exaltant baboon
was like a mastery aced,
was like a spectacle too ugly to behold.
Before dying, it shook my hand like three tired popes,

Before dying, it strutted, pretending to thank me.
The passport is subject to unholy fits.
The mountain is climbed sorrowfully.
Get here this moment on your knees.
Go out slowly but towards joy,
crawling along the broken glass of your mistakes,
a cautious second life.
No one has to love life even
just to continue living.

III

Now come through a beating of pasts
born so as to miss my vote.
It is when through a slant that it begins with bitter purity,
and by some chance bitching gets it a poetry
into pallid flung arms they boldly set to
coming full circle in some mind's interchange,
and each comes into an encampment of its own.
With its arrival, the year is splintered into ten thousand months,
to kill something aleatory from my bitter cache,
thinking perhaps by this action to arrive at one spring.

It is certain the typed characters dog in shame,
fuses follow them like tails, hissing in guilt
before which cult I bear greetings of change.
The necessary amount of steps must be walked.
We are as wanted as any drug,
as dangerous as two colds from one source.

GB: SPRING'S RELATIVITY

I

The nouns hunger for sense,
hunger to be known, desire visibility
or some other approach to being.
They know that when we oldsters lose words
we start with nouns, start with proper nouns
and then what we used to call common nouns.
Things fall apart and then they are gone from sense.
They fall to the hard place, taking the warm thing with them.

Yipping like puppies, they crawl on their soft bellies,
eager for the world outside the box, where the big nouns are.
They can feel growing things inside them, feel
tendrils of the bones' sensuality.

The dark dishwater of an x-ray plate has
nothing to tell them, these critters new to the world.
They've just got their eyes open, they
must learn how to chew. Set their noses for
garbage and somehow discarded fish, and
persons, places and things in dreams.

The water's sudden edge
presents tiny fish the next wave will
hurl onto the sand, little nouns silver in the air.
Simpler than any lobster, these bits of protein
feed stray dogs patrolling the *playa*,
eyes alert for the next sudden wave.
There's a noun made at once out of nothing but motion.
We are the ones who do that, we
sentence-makers, quiet and muscular as sharks.
Where this takes place is our authority.

Pelicans dive just offshore; we hear their wings creak
as they pass our window, their bills waiting to sense nouns.
They fall to the wet place, taking the shine with them.
Some old people tell you the sea speaks;
no surprise there—we sense words
in the grain of our oceanside floor boards.

II

I used to dance like air in autumn.
I fill my lungs now with imaginary breath,
a memory of speed. a notion of consumable gases.
Fill my lower sky with pelicans,
and I will shake my white head with bewilderment
that such goofy critters can slice the October above with such grace.
Still I swallow as much of that atmosphere
as my belly can hold. I drag my legs now, my dance is there
when I close my eyes. There in submarine time, under
the rainclouds at least, my limbs perform to no
command of the mind I think I'm sharing.
These fall birds patrol like policemen pretending there is nothing to fear,

Take me bowling, I was once. able to boast,
and I will show you what dancing is all about. It's all about
nothing, I've misplaced every scoresheet I ever filled.
I watch birds above me without a shotgun in my hands.

III

Now come through a poem you can't read,
or so you think. Look, there's a noun, oh, and
another word. Who's to say that that one cannot come right after that one?
Who needs your bitter purity? Just listen—
maybe lift your sporting weapon. You may not bring those two
difficult birds down in a million years.

They may not be like anything. They may be speech
that made it into the air in autumn. And not like this,
no, not like this, no, not ta dumb ta dumb ta dumb.
The year splinters into ten thousand months,

thinking, perhaps, by this action to arrive at one spring.
Is that what we imagine in relativity? Is the season truly
aleatory? Taking a chance on love, do we over-depend
on the weather? The necessary number of steps
will be changed while you are walking. Nothing is as dangerous
as the cold I will acquire from your mouth.

Jennifer Moxley

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

"Let's be real here:
I hate this book."

There is passion,
but no truth.
Thumbs down,
Rachel Carson.

Hate is where
we do not find
ourselves. Or fear
we won't, should
we go looking
for mirrors.

I walk out.
The day is bright.
On the bank of
the beautiful river
that runs through
the wealthy campus,
a flock of Canada Geese.

Thin from their journey,
they pull up insects
from the manicured grass.
Up close their
black-webbed feet
look like
industrial rubber.

Jennifer Moxley

THANKSGIVING

How much more pleasing
the aromatic kitchen
than the taste in the mouth
of the bird.

Like family—
from the Latin *famulus*
second declension masculine
genitive *famuli*
meaning slave,
not *salve* or *fragrant*
but *servant*—
so sweet
in contemplation
yet in the expectation of,
pure dread.

Jennifer Moxley

THE MEDITATION LESSON

Long ago I coffined the worry
that should I cultivate thoughts
destined only for books, thoughts
not caught by power or commerce,
my life would have no meaning.
I am happy. Nothing needs me to see it.
Even the distance from my true love
can be closed by a page in a book.

The clubhouse is warm. I sit with four
others in structured chairs, direct a soft
gaze at a stained carpet. Soft faced
and voiced the Buddhist teacher
speaks of her concern. Lost in thought
you miss your life, she says. Empty
your mind to find the world. She
is calm in her certainty and pushy.
She is a very good teacher.

I question. You say see the sound
but let it be. Why sight? In her eyes
I am a little child. She pauses and breathes.
You love your thoughts, she says.
Your mind is pleased with them.

Yes, I think. She is right. My thoughts
are the house in which I am guest.
It faces West and is filled with longing.
In it the words come and go. A bird sings
outside the window. So long as I am
allowed to stay here, I know all shall be well.

Jennifer Moxley

WHILE WRITING IN MY JOURNAL

A large gray squirrel startles me.
A thwack and weighty shadow
animates the dark tree
just outside the window.

My eyeglasses feel fragile
as my hands take care
with their approach.
A metal click takes back my ear.
I turn to see a small red squirrel
plow through pine debris.
I, too, am busy.

Endre Farkas

RIP PVT
1944-2021

We used to listen to that midnight jazz
together, apart
to the airwaves; bebop, cool,
Love Supreme into our rooms
into the words, sounds, poems
each of us at our desks
messy, neat
round about midnight.

We used to sit on my couch
watching Barney Miller:
Wojo, Nick, Fish, Dietrich and the rest
solve the petty crimes of our lives
with lines of laughter-touching truths,
the sad moments that somehow
soothed our souls
round about midnight.

We used to toke and talk poetry:
ride the vrooms of metaphors
wash with splashes of images
kick the rhythms of licks
zip zap meanness
wheelbarrow joy
up mountains of loneliness
till one of us had to take a piss.
And then again, continue
way past midnight.

Too much for a straight life
you spilled your heart
your exuberance, your life
so precisely all over the page.
And still, after all that
the bitch that you loved
with such meticulous passion
left you.

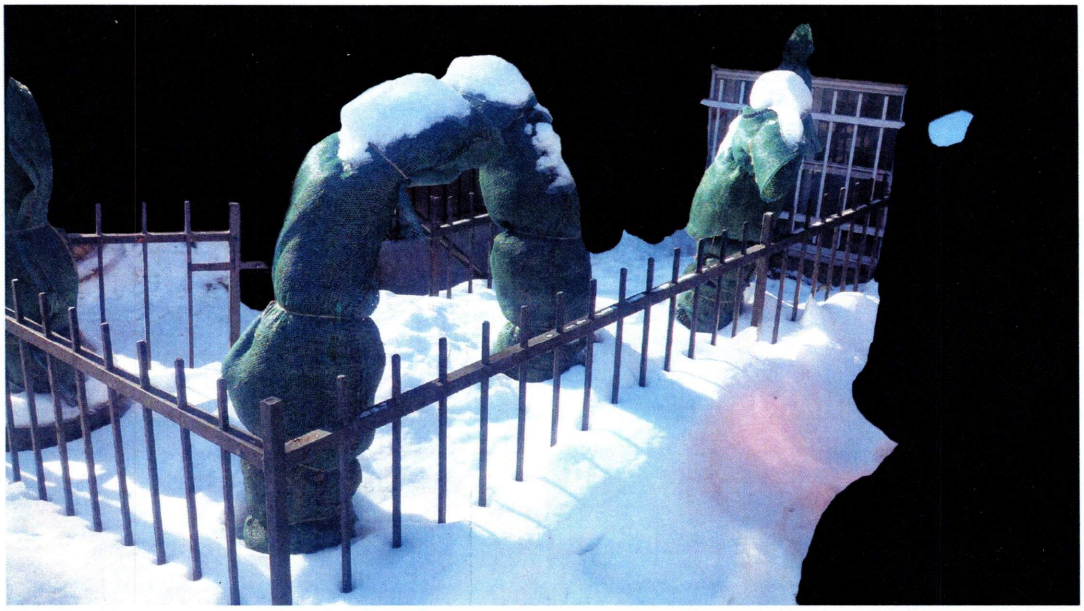
I don't know if it was round about midnight
but she did.

And now, after years of staring into the dust
listening to the silence of the darkening walls
ranting to the empty bottles and butts of smoke
waiting for her return,
you left her.

A weeping widow plays Round About Midnight.

I went to the Garden of Love
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green

And the gates of this Chapel were shut
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of love
That so many sweet flowers bore;



Endre Farkas

And I saw it was filled with graves,
and tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds
And binding with briars my joy and desires.

William Blake
The Garden of Love

Believed to have been composed by poets Tom Konyves and Ken Norris beginning in 2012 when William Blake would have been 223, **"The Proverbsi of Hello"** was the poets' second full-scale attempt to present their personal philosophi. As Geoffrey Keynes writes in his introduction to a 1975 illustrated edition of the work, "Blake regarded human imagination as the essential divine quality by which God manifested himself in Man." To which Tom Konyves and Ken Norris replied, "You had me at Hello."

Proverbsi of Hello by Tom Konyves and Ken Norris

Where man is not nature is. A watched torrent never loads. "Not" is the most powerful word. Not! Islamophobia isn't spicy. Avoid the void: play dominoes with a friend, drink tea. The past: a foreign language. The present: a butterfly on the wing. The future: a leap of faith. Perhaps she'll say what the moon won't tell you. Shaving grace. Give them more than they bargained for. When they return, it will be thanksgiving. Bolster your image with a pin from Finland! It doesn't compute, it enters. You can't step into the same mirror twice. Why write it in pencil? Moma and Dada. There are ten seasonings in hell's kitchen. When someone says, you've outdone yourself, it's not a compliment. If a poem appears on a page and there is no one to read it... does it matter? If you're going to be late for class, bring a sleigh. Expectation is at the heart of desires. Go to Africa on a lark. The worst mistakes are the ones you didn't make. Staccato ain't no avocado. In an unfair life, there are kindnesses. X marks the spot where my dog died. The ideal vehicle will be self-sufficient but may be hard on the nerves. Eternity breathes you in. Christmastime is here again. In the true version the ants tell the grasshopper to fuck off and die. Illustrative works are exhausted acrobats with good hair. Heart and stroke: if only we could see around coroners! Dope is for the living, said the skeleton in the closet. The divine image is coming back to you. The Chinese will conquer us with the beauty of their women. You're grasping at straws; you're gasping for air. The wisdom of age is cornflakes. Contact the afterworld today! Leave your glasses in the fridge. Calling someone "great" is the equivalent of a banana peel. Shopping has always been the secret mantra of the world. Clarity? It happens first in poetry. Maybe when you get to Thailand. Nothing's perfect at 68.